



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Purchasing 40 Percent Local and/or Sustainable Food by 2025

Final Report & Recommendations

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PANEL ON FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

December, 2018



Resource Stewardship Goal 7g:

Increase production and purchase of local/sustainable food to 40% by 2025



Nov. 2015: University adopts goal

April 2016: Panel charge issued by Provost McPheron & Sr VP Adams-Gaston

Sept. 2016: Panel produces action plan

Dec. 2017: Panel produces progress report

Dec. 2018: Panel presents “final” report



Panel Process

Leadership Team

- Zia Ahmed, Student Life Dining Services
- Brian Snyder, Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT)
- Kaleigh O'Reilly, USG Sustainability Committee

Interdisciplinary Engagement

- Nearly 50 students, faculty, staff and community members
- Six academic departments, five administrative departments
- Monthly full panel meetings (on average)
- Five concurrent workgroups
- 22 Perspective Review presentations and interviews





Panel Guiding Principles

1. Achieve 100% **transparency** with regard to the sources and production means for all food sourced for campus dining venues.
2. Establish clear and consistent metrics by which **continuous improvement** can be achieved throughout the course of this project.
3. Assure that the methodology used reflects the **diversity** of perspectives within this dynamic and ever-changing community.





Key Definitions

- **Local**

Buckeye Bullseye: Represents range of embedded institutional values

Goal Achievement: Raw materials originate within 275 miles of Ohio State campuses

Also Track: Food from North America, Ohio, within 50 miles of campuses

Continuous Improvement: Procurement moves to center of bullseye over time

- **Sustainable**

Third Party Certifiers: Ohio State cannot declare a food provider to be sustainable. Instead, university will use expertise of third-party certifiers to make objective determinations based on consistent criteria and independent inspections.

Five Sustainability Categories: *Economic, Environmental, Workers, Animals, Communities*. Food providers that meet two categories will be included in goal achievement. One of those categories must be environment category. For livestock operations, second category must be animal welfare.

Continuous Improvement: Food provider certification in additional categories over time.

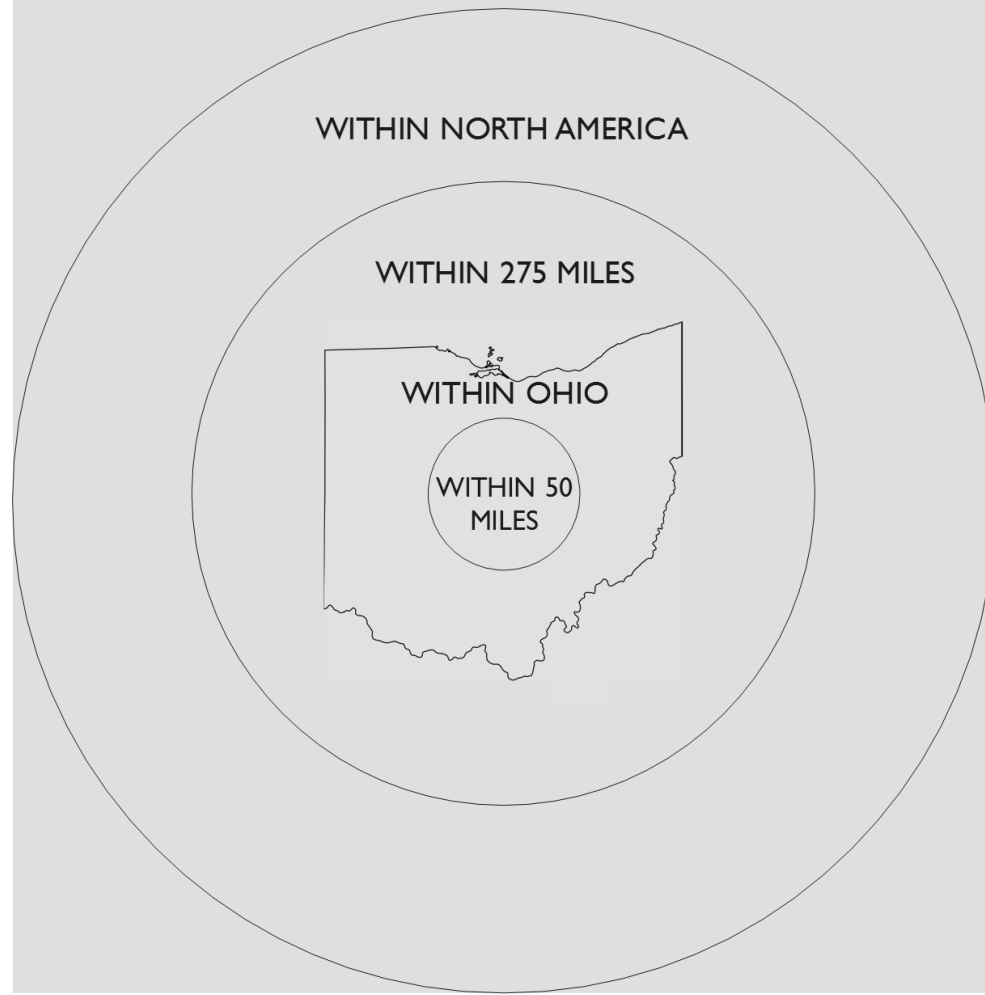
- **Ohio Sourced**

Foods verified to be processed, packed and/or distributed by businesses located in Ohio whether or not the raw materials qualify as local or sustainable.



What is local?

Buckeye Bullseye







Topics of Interest

- **Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) & Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)**

Apply Uniform Standards: They must quality through third-party certification as would any other product for consideration within “sustainable” definition.

Flexible Approach: Some certifications will not allow GMO or CAFO products, while others may, leaving opportunity to examine production system issues. Also assumes future innovations and evolving science that backs up existing and new certification systems that will require regular review.

- **Sweetened Beverages**

Ohio Statutory Limitation: State of Ohio law treats “soft drinks” differently from other food items. The panel determined that any beverage or substance not considered as “food” by state law should also not count within the university’s sustainability goal.



Key Data

- FY17 Total Food Spend: \$33,597,600
- FY18 Total Food Spend: \$31,132,627
- FY18 excludes “non-food” items per panel’s definitions
- Figures account for Columbus, Mansfield, Newark, Wooster
- Focusing on fresh meat, dairy, yogurt, tomatoes, lettuce:
 - 9.5% came from local sources in FY17
 - 11.7% came from local sources in FY18



❖ Better data tracking mechanisms and practices will be needed for the future!



Key Recommendations

- Designate standing governance body to provide goal implementation oversight
- Build on university's strong food system curriculum to establish a wider student-learning platform regarding their role and impact on food procurement decisions
- Develop adequate and sustainable goal implementation funding sources
- Identify existing programs to develop relationships with potential vendors (farms/small businesses) and facilitate introductions to appropriate purchasing units for consideration





Conclusion

- It is urgently noted that success will require not only the steps recommended here, but in particular, a clear and consistent intention, and sometimes even an insistent nudge, from university administration in the years to come.
- Whatever else is said, one major advantage regarding food procurement practices at Ohio State has been clear from the beginning. With a mostly “self-operated” food system, the university has the flexibility needed to reach its goals without compromising quality or allowing public messaging to overwhelm earnest attention to reality on the ground.
- What better way would there be for this great institution to realize its desired leadership role as a land grant university than to lead the way in achieving the goals set out in this report while encouraging its members, partners, neighbors, friends, and even competitors, to do the same in new and imaginative ways?